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Washington's Public Library.

The law is inimical to the general library interests of this city." So said Mr. Dockery in the House on Thursday referring to the act of June 3, 1896, creating a public library in this city as a supplement of the public educational system of the Dis-

The enactment of this law was bitterly opposed by Mr. Dockery, and ever since Congress approved the measure in spite of his opposition he has obstructed the project with a venemous hostility that is inexplicabie. At the second session of the last Congress he succeeded in causing the failure in conference of the modest appropriation proposed for the maintenance of the library, but on the other hand the House voted down the proposition of himself and his coadjutors that this municipal expense in violation of the act of 1878 should be levied exclusively upon the local tax payers. In the pending District estimates a small appropriation is recommended by the Commissioners for the maintenance of this institution which Congress has created and ordered to be maintained. And Mr. Dockery responds with a proposition for the re-

The library act of 1896 is the only piece of legislation ever enacted by Congress for the purpose of giving the workingmen, the school children and the government employes of the capital the circulating library and night reading facilities, which are enjoyed by nearly every little New England village. It was demanded by the labor organizations, the school authorities, the Board of Trade, the citizens' associations, by every organized representative of local public sentiment, and Congress in granting it corrected a legislative omission, which was a shame and disgrace to it as the local legislature of the District.

To meet the absolute necessity of books as working adjuncts in the public schools, small libraries had been formed in some of the buildings, but to complete and perfect its educational system, already so admirable, by adding the people's free university to the free school, Washington sorely needed the proposed library. creation was demanded in the name of the (3,000 children of school age in the District, and especially in the name of the 33,060 of this number who were over twelve Investigation of the departmental libra-

ries showed that a very large percentage of their volumes, exceeding slightly 300,000 in number (not 850,000, as stated in the recent House debate), was composed of technical books and books of reference. which had a direct bearing on the work of the department which possessed them: that there were only between 20,000 and 30,000 volumes suitable for a general circulating library, and that these were confined mainly to three departments, the Interior, War and Treasury. The clerks in the departments which had no libraries needed them, and the favored departments needed a wider range of reading material than the small collection at the disposal of each provided. There were in round personal discomfiture will be of small monumbers about 20,000 persons residing in salaries from the government. Many of these represented families, and the number of readers in this government constituency could be estimated only by the customary multiplication of the number of government em-

Last, but not least, came a powerful appeal from the District workingmen. The census of 1800 disclosed the fact that, while it is the policy of the capital to encourage only light and clean manufacturing, like that of Paris, over 23,000 adults were engaged in the District in lines of work which are classed as manufactures, omitting from consideration entirely all the other numerous forms of labor.

Mr. Dockery calls a law drawn on the approved lines of library legislation all over the country, and meeting this urgent local need "inimical to the library interests of this city," and will not consent to the opening of the Congressional Library at night, unless this law is repealed and unless the 20,000 worn-out duplicates that constitute the miscellaneous books in the departmental libraries are taken from the clerks and removed to the Congressional Library.

Of course if Congress, even at this late day, will make a genuine free circulating library of the great national collection, as closely in touch with the schools, for instance, as that of Worcester, Mass., is with the local educational system, and will also enlarge the reference usefulness of the Congressional Library by night opening, the necessity of a city public library will be removed. But night opening alone will not suffice, nor will a stringently restricted and obviously temporary circulating feature. As the Congressional Library's scope is enlarged, that of the city library will diminish, but there is no reasonable prospect of any circulating use of the national collection which will deprive the city library, as an adjunct of the schools, of all

It is unnecessary, therefore, for Congress to undo the most creditable piece of local legislation which it has enacted for years in order to perform its duty in wisely and properly enlarging the usefulness of the Congressional Library; and it should not do so merely to gratify Mr. Dockery in the indulgence of his unfortunate habit of constantly prodding the unhappy District and the wretched clerks with the long sharp stick of his displeasure.

The leadership of the marine band is a place of honor, but there is not enough profit connected with it to make the scramble for it very general when a vacancy oc-

The Single-Contract System. Secretary Gage's announcement that he believes in bailding the government structures by single contracts merits cordial approval. The Star has been following this subject with the greater interest because of the deplorable object lesson of the waste involved by the piece-meal plan of construction afforded by the so-called Washington city post office. Three years ago The Star undertook to discover the causes for the dilatory work on this building. From day to day inquiries were made as to the character of the work being done, the progress made, the number of men employed and other items of the enterprise and after mature deliberation the conclusion-was inevitable that the main cause of the difficulty was the unbusiness-like system of letting a number of independent contracts, each with its own requirements and restrictions and each drawing upon the time and money at the disposal of the department without returning a maximum of results. Several flagrant instances of con-

and costly delays in the completion of items of the work. With several contractors under engagement the chances for vio lation of specifications multiplied and the difficulty of enforcing the stipulations in regard to time limits was greatly increased. Again and again contracts were delayed beyond the specified time and after a peried of negotiation almost invariably all penalties were remitted and thus a premium was placed upon a disregard of the contractor's obligations.

Therefore The Star early advocated such change in the system as that which Secretary Gage now indicates. It is entirely within his own power, so far as the appropriations will permit of complete contracts being let, yet it is to be recognized that Congress frequently first limits the cost of building and then proceeds to appropriate yearly allowances for the construction. It should surely be possible to devise a form of contract covering an entire job notwithstanding the fact that the money for the work is not all appropriated by the Congress. Such a contingent agreement, dependable for its full effect upon the ultimate appropriation of all the necessary money, might readily be reached between the government and the builders, just as similar contracts are entered into in the case of river and harbor improvements, called "continuing contracts." Secretary Gage has but to apply the initiative to secure a more economical system of constructions. Had the complete contract p an been followed in the case of the local structure it is safe to say that the building would even now be in service, instead of being fully a year away from its occupation. The engineers of the army and the constructors of the navy could testify conincirgly, no doubt, as to the efficacy of the complete contract system, and Secretary Gage has but to refer to many examples afforded by these two corps to demonstrate to Congress the advisability of the new plan, in case legislative action may be ound to be necessary to enable him to take the first steps.

Ohto. The time is near at hand when we shall know the real truth about the senatorial situation in Ohio. The country has been treated to an unusual amount of gossip on he subject ever since the polls closed in November. Now Mr. Hanna is done for. Gov. Bushnell, or somebody else, by a combination of disgruntled republicans and democrats, is to carry off the prize. Now Mr. Hanna is absolutely certain of election. Opposition is admitted, but it lacks both courage and leadership. In the rural phrase, of pleasant origin, it cannot cut the mustard. The two statements have alterpated with the happiest effects of mystification, now one and now the other, and each from time to time carrying some new and unimpeachable detail, until people at a distance are justified in wondering what the actual facts may be.

Mr. Hanna is his party's nominee for senator. The nomination was regularly made by the Toledo convention, and is as binding on the party as were other acts performed by that body, some of which have been ratified. Gov. Bushnell was nominated for re-election by that convention. His nomination was no more binding than is that of Mr. Hanna. He had no more claims to republican support for governor than Mr. Hanna now has for senator. The Toledo convention could not have been regular as to the one man and irregular as to

Despite all the gossip, the country expects Mr. Hanna to be chosen. His defeat, it can easily be seen, would have conse quences, even in Ohio, of far greater than personal bearing. Mr. Hanna is at once his party's nominee, the President's personal friend and choice for the place, and in that sense the administration's candidate. If that combination is not sufficient to insure his election, then Mr. Hanna's ment in comparison with what the republian party in Ohio and algon evitably suffer. Such a thrust at the administration from the President's own state would invite to disorder and disorganization wherever factions now exist.

How many members of the next House do the republicans of Ohio expect to electi How important do they consider republican centrol of the next House to be? How necessary is it for them to work in harmony next year in order to contribute their share toward continued republican supre macy in the affairs of the country? And how much for such harmony is this senatorial row calculated to make?

Philadelphia's Plea for the Potomac.

The Philadelphia Press yesterday entered a strong plea for the betterment of the drinking water supplied to the people of Washington and their official and transient grests. It noted Representative Barrett's bill to give the Capitol a filtered water supply, and suggests that the entire service from the Potomac should likewise be filtered. The Press' kindness in thus pleading for the capital city is gratifying, even though the Potomac water is vilely slandered by comparison with the horrible stuff that flows into the Quaker city's mains from the Schuylkill. The Potomac at its muddlest is as the purest of mountain springs when the Schuylkill at the Philadelphia in-take is considered as a

pose. As that paper said: "If filtration is needed for the Capitol building it is quite as much needed for the capital city." Subsequent remarks on this line are worthy of reproduction, thus: "Washington is a magnificent city in many respects. It ought to be a model city in its hyglenic regulations. It ought to have unimpeachable water, and in that respect set an example to other American cities not having the advantage of a city councils of such high average intelligence as the Congress of the United States."

standard. Yet the Press' comparison was

undoubtedly intended for a generous pur-

If Santa Claus is anxious to do some thing of real benefit to mankind he might present each member of the Baltimore Base Ball Club with a hand book of eti-

Luetgert insists that his wife is alive and that he believes she eloped with some man. Luetgert is becoming something of an expert testifier himself.

General Blanco claims that Spain will offer autonomy to Cuba, but does not state what Spain will do !f Cuba tries to take it.

McCoy and Creedon may be able pugilists, but they cannot compare with the

older men in their business as ad-writers. No Fixed Tenure for Spoils.

It seems to be a mistake to propose in connection with a return to the spoils sys-

tem a fixed tenure of office. The spoils system is founded upon two propositions: First, that the patronage of the government should be distributed upon the recommendations of the senators' and representatives of the majority party in Congress, and, second, that frequent changes should take place in the public service in order that as many people as possible may have a chance at what is called "the public crib." In other words, the patronage is to be turned over to successful aspirants for congressional honors and used by them for their political needs. Clearly, therefore, they should be left as free-handed as possible in the use of it.

Let us suppose a case. A politician, after a very hard fight, has succeeded in getting elected to the House. He inherits, as part of the belongings of the office, a number of good places in his district and some in the tract interference were revealed. The duplication of bosses led to confusion and the over-happing of contracts necessitated long

Congress election. He will want a second term, of course. He makes his selections from among those who have worked the hardest for him, and they enter upon their duties. Now, if it is in his power to remove these people at his own pleasure he can make as certain of their activity in his second race as he was certain of it in the first. He holds their political lives in the hollow of his hand. But if, once they are installed in office, they are guaranteed a four years' term, or longer, they become in some measure independent, and may consult their own pleasure about "hustling" for the boss a second time. As the creatures of his power, they should be sub-

ject to him at all times. As for rotation in office, the movement. if again begun should be swift. The people will demand that. The appetite for place, if encouraged, grows very rapidly. If the government service is to be described and treated as a huge "crib," and the political "hustlers" and "heelers" are invited to come up and feed, no fellow ought to be permitted to keep his place long enough to get fat. After a good, square meal let him fall back and give place to the hungry fellew behind him. Let the old free bunch ery go up: "Come one, come all: room

abounds for great and small." The spoils system is as clearly defined as the merit system, and if it is to be reinaugurated let it be upon a liberal and symmetrical plan.

The Clerks and Christmas. It is to be sincerely hoped that the movement now in progress in behalf of the closing of Washington stores all day on Christmas day will meet with success. The mercantile clerks of Washington are a faithful, energetic set of men and women, who are always loyal to the interests of their employers, a statement that is based on the grateful testimony of numbers of our leading merchants. They deserve a Christmas day that is a real Christmas, from the time they get up until they go to bed, and it will undoubtedly meet the approval of all the good people in Washington if this gift is granted them.

It is depressing to note that the announcement of a practical and complete flying machine seldom if ever appears twice concerning the same apparatus.

Now that the six-day bicycle race has been suppressed, some attention might be well bestowed on the terrors of the sixhour congressional speech.

Canada is always willing to talk over the sealing question or to do anything else that consumes time without protecting the seals. A relief expedition to the Klondike is

scientific efforts to reach the north pole. Mr. Croker will gladly watch the old year out, provided he considers it safe to take his eyes off David B. Hill.

likely to do much more for humanity than

SHOOTING STARS.

The Perversity of Moods.

"Don't you feel more like working at some times than at others?" inquired the young woman.

"Yes," he replied; "I do. When I am riding in a railway car, where I can't possibly find a pen, pencil or paper or anybody to talk business to, I get to feeling so industrious that it makes me nervous."

Standing Punishment. Of truth as "mighty" men speak pat;

And when to mind we call How often it is thrown down flat By numerous folk, we wonder that It has survived at all.

Advice. "Remember one thing that I am about to

tell you," said Senator Sorghum to the ambitious young man. "It is a rule that is well worth remembering." "Never do anything that your conscience

may reproach you for. Hire somebody else

Precise.

"So you don't approve of so liberal a plan of autonomy for the Cubans," said one Spanish official.

"Certainly not," was the reply. "What would you suggest?"

"Well, I don't want to be unreasonable. I'd tell them that they will be permitted to do anything they want to, provided they will guarantee not to want to do anything that we haven't told them we wanted them to do."

Decorating.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she inquired as she dropped an armful of mistletoe on the floor. "Yes," he answered. "You are not going to put all that on the chandelier?" "Oh, no. We are going to make a canopy of it for the entire ceiling."

The Immortal Anecdote. 'Tis sad, when you are getting bald, And growing slightly gray,

To find so frequently recalled Your youth that fades away.

'Tis not the lass in dresses long, Nor boy with wisdom new, Who makes you feel the current strong Of time that carries you.

But when that tale you loved in youth With circumstance is told Of some new congressman as truth, You know you're getting old.

Gas and Shade Trees. From the New York Evening Post.

Trees planted in the residential streets tenement districts of New York will None of the conditions which sustain tree life exist where it is proposed to place them. Even old trees, deeply rooted and reaching down to Croton leaks and waterpockets, die prematurely. With young trees, their first effort to adapt themselves to their new environment would be fatal. Their average life would be less than fortyeight hours. There are several reasons for this. The principal one is that our soil is sterilized by the enormous leakage of gas from mains and service connections. I have seen a tree forty years old and splendidly vigorous killed in twenty-four hours by a gas leak in a main twenty feet from its base.

But Not Too Many. From the San Francisco Chronicle.

Last year and the year before there Last year and the year before there were no naval maneuvers in the gulf, but this year that field will see some very pretty evolutions by Uncle Sam's ships. It might pay the Spanish and German governments to send a few naval experts over to take note of them.

"Beware of Vidders." From the New York Herald.

In view of the fact that seven widows, "sod" and "grass," started for the Klondike yesterday, it is only fair and just to recall to the gold hunters in the frozen north the sage and profitable advice of the elder Weller to his hopeful son. A Mercenary Northwestern Teacher From the Chicago Post.

One of the peculiar features of a North Dakota hold-up reported by telegraph is that the highwaymen got \$15 from a school teacher. That seems to be an awful lot for any one who gives his time to educational

A New Question as to Whisky. From the Louisville Courier-Journal (dem.). Major B. G. Thomas asks the return of a bottle of forty-five-year-old whisky. Does he think it immortal?

17300 1-lb. seaves to the barrel.

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25c for \$1.25 Copyright Books.

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59c for Ladies' \$1 Kid Gloves.

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59c for Men's \$1 Underwear.

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